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Role of plasma and serum proteases in the degradation of elastin.

Romero N, Tinker D, Hyde D, Rucker RB.

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Accelerated proteolysis of tropoelastin and elastin occurs in the major arteries of chicks fed copper-deficient diets. Signs of elastin degradation are not obvious in normal arteries of copper-supplemented chicks. It is proposed that the sources of proteases that effect elastin degradation are from plasma and serum. Both calcium-dependent proteases and kallikrein were effective in degrading tropoelastin and partially crosslinked insoluble elastin into peptides similar to those detected in aortic extracts from copper-deficient chicks. As dietary copper deficiency progresses it is also possible to detect elastin peptides in plasma.

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